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Concerns on SB 14

Senate Bill 14 (SB 14) proposes changes to Missouri's pesticide registration laws, including adopting federal standards for labeling requirements. This shift raises concerns about potential dangers and liabilities associated with pesticide use.

Dangers of Changing Labeling Requirements

1. Federal Standards Over State Requirements: *Section 10 of SB 14* states that a pesticide label approved by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) under the Federal Insecticide Fungicide and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) will be sufficient for Missouri's labeling requirements. This could lead to less stringent standards, as federal regulations might not fully address local environmental or health concerns specific to Missouri.

2. Carcinogenicity Classification: The same section allows the EPA's carcinogenicity classification to suffice for warning labels regarding cancer. This reliance on federal classifications might not adequately reflect the latest scientific research or specific local risks, potentially downplaying the dangers of certain pesticides.

Concerns About Shielding Large Companies from Liability

1. Reduced State Oversight: By aligning with federal standards, SB 14 could reduce Missouri's ability to enforce stricter regulations or monitor pesticide safety more closely. Large companies like Bayer could benefit by limiting state-level scrutiny and potential liabilities (*Section 10*).

2. Registration and Compliance: The bill emphasizes compliance with federal laws and regulations (*Sections 6 and 7*), which might make it easier for large companies to navigate regulatory requirements without facing additional state-level scrutiny. This could shield them from liability by ensuring compliance with federal standards, even if those standards are less stringent than what Missouri might otherwise require.

3. Experimental Use Permits: *Section 8* allows for experimental use permits, which large companies could use to test new pesticides with potentially reduced oversight. While intended to facilitate research, this provision might also enable companies to sidestep full regulatory scrutiny during the experimental phase.

In summary, SB 14's reliance on federal labeling standards and compliance requirements could lead to reduced state oversight and potentially shield large companies from liability for harm caused by pesticides. This shift in regulatory approach may compromise Missouri's ability to enforce stricter safety standards tailored to local conditions.